

Trump's Proposed "Safe Zones" in Syria Could Lead to Military Escalation and a Broader War

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Trump saying he'll "absolutely do safe zones in Syria for the people" has nothing to do with protecting them, if implemented.

It's about keeping refugees out of Europe and America. It's continued US interventionism abroad, what he rhetorically opposed.

The best way to protect Syrians is by stopping support for ISIS and other terrorist groups attacking them. If good faith US efforts are made to restore peace, including heavy pressure on Gulf states and Israel to support conflict resolution, they'll all be safe.

His [executive order](#) titled "Protecting the Nation From Terrorist Attacks From Foreign Nationals" suspends immigration from targeted Muslim countries.

A separate draft EO authorizes the establishment of safe zones for Syrian civilians, saying "(p)ursuant to the cessation of refugee processing for Syrian nationals, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense, is directed within 90 days of the date of this order to produce a plan to provide safe areas in Syria and in the surrounding region in which Syrian nationals displaced from their homeland can await firm settlement, such as repatriation or potential third-country resettlement."

Trump's proposal is a prescription for escalated war, not resolution. It's hard imagining Russia, Iran and Syria going along with his scheme. Putin and Trump will discuss it on Saturday among other issues.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia wasn't informed about Trump's plan. He's acting unilaterally or in cahoots with NATO and regional partners - violating Syrian sovereignty if instituted, lessening chances for conflict resolution.

Peskov warned about possible consequences of this action, saying it's important not to "exacerbate the situation." Trump is expected to instruct the Pentagon and State Department to complete a plan for establishing safe zones within 90 days after his order is signed.

It lacks details of where they'll be located, how they'll be protected, how much the scheme will cost, whether a no-fly zone will be implemented, and the risk of US/Russia confrontation over this very sensitive issue.

Safe zones will illegally redraw Syria's map, violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity,

what Damascus and Moscow strongly oppose.

Last year, Joint Chiefs chairman General Joseph (“fighting Joe”) Dunford said implementing safe and no-fly zones “require(s) us to go to war with Syria and Russia.”

Former Joint Chiefs Chairman General Martin Dempsey warned about greater intervention in Syria, including the perils of establishing safe and no-fly zones, saying it could involve thousands of US troops.

Costs could run “in the billions.” The plan requires “hundreds of ground and sea-based aircraft, intelligence and electronic warfare support, and enablers for refueling and communications.”

Dempsey estimated over \$1 billion a month in cost, explaining around 70,000 US troops would be needed, warning the entire scheme could backfire. Greater regional conflict could follow, turning a bad situation into potential disaster.

Syria needs humanitarian aid, peace, stability, reconstruction, and employment for its displaced people so they can begin rebuilding their lives.

Obama’s war wrecked them. Greater US intervention for the wrong reasons risks escalated conflict instead of all-out efforts to resolve it.

Trump’s safe zones scheme sounds more like a declaration of war than a good faith effort to end it.

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